

Why Reduce/Eliminate Refined Sugar and Artificial Sugars?

Have you tried Atkins, Paleo, and other such diets? Have you given up eating fruit or grains? Do you try to avoid sugar altogether in this manner or do you acknowledge it as a weakness and indulgence? Our love-hate relationship with sugar is perplexing for a multitude of reasons.

Every cell in our body burns sugar for energy, so living without sugar is not a viable option. This cellular need explains our instinctual craving for sugar. Behavioral studies show that babies react to sugar much the same as an addict to cocaine! Unfortunately, this addiction to sugar doesn't completely go away as we mature into adults.

In the beginning, there was real food—plants with sugars (carbohydrates), starches, fiber (both of which are made of sugar molecules), and thousands of important phytonutrients. Fruits, vegetables, lentils, beans, seeds, nuts, and grains (without gluten—see gluten article to identify which grains to avoid) are all fair game for healthy living.

Note that broccoli or any other vegetable would have sugar as its first or second ingredient, if vegetables came with labels. But you don't have to count grams of sugar or calories when you choose these plant foods because they contain other nutrients that trigger natural appetite control when you eat too much of them. Sugar molecules attained from plants also serve a myriad of purposes. For example, all the mucus in our 20+ feet of intestinal tubing, where the vital activity of microbiota occurs within a matrix of sugar molecules.

We also store chains of sugar in the form of glycogen in the liver, so our brain, which has the greatest energetic need from sugar, can function properly at all times. When glycogen stores fall to critical levels, we experience hunger. If

we don't eat enough plant sources of sugar, we starve our brain, along with every other cell, tissue, and organ.

When you eat the foods mentioned above, you increase your blood sugar above, within the "zone of intelligence and willpower" so you can think clearly and make good choices, including good food choices. That's one of the main objectives of Healthy Living – to have you experience that mental clarity.

On the flip side, processed foods deliver sugar without the fiber and micronutrients. This has two immediate effects:

- Our sugar levels rise too quickly because there's usually little to no fiber in these foods to slow down the release of sugar into the bloodstream.
- The body compensates for this rise by releasing insulin and converting the excess sugar to fat for storage. This is when we get "**hangry**" and eat whatever is easy and convenient as our brain feels the sugar deficit.

The substitution of sugar with artificial sweeteners is also not an answer. Studies show that those who drink diet sodas or use artificial sweeteners are more likely to become obese. Thus, we recommend you give up processed foods with sugar, refined sugar, and artificial sugars for Healthy Living. Instead, eat more plants that give you the experience of natural sugar metabolism and the mental clarity and natural energy whole plants can provide.

-Source "Shred10 Guide"

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